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Thought Seed for the
Season of Lent

By Robert S. Barrett, D.D.

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THOUGHT SEED

FOR THE

SEASON OF LENT

BY

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THOMAS WHITTAKER
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THOUGHT SEED FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday.

WHEREIN lies the reasonableness of fasting? It is bringing the body into subjection; it is a recognition that the body is a machine. The body is an important machine, God given. It is a dangerous machine, capable of destroying its owner. A good servant, a bad master. It is to keep the soul's mastership that we fast. The best fasting will have this distinct object in view. It will be done with intelligence and system. There is a vast deal of random, aimless fasting, well meant, but blind. Could we not have a text-book on fasting,—a book of tactics to increase our efficiency in fighting the flesh? For want of something else, suppose we use some book on hygiene. How would Dio Lewis on "Our Digestion" do for a guide to fasting? Why not have a competent teacher to tell us what to eat, how to eat, how much to eat; to tell us what food and drink conduce to animal development, what manner of living helps to bring the body into subjection, and make it a useful servant instead of a cruel master? If we have intel-

Second Day of Lent.

ligence and system about this important business of fasting, it will be much more interesting, reasonable, and helpful to us. It will surely not be less Christian or acceptable to God because it is done with system, not less devotional, not less compatible with prayer. And these hygienic rules of life will furnish ninety-nine out of every hundred persons all the scope for abstinence from *food* which they could desire, or which a season of humiliation could demand. Of course propriety will suggest abstinence in other directions,—abstinence from gayety and festivity while we are commemorating the sufferings of our Saviour.

Second Day of Lent.

FORBIDDEN fruit is sweet. It is sweetened by the devil. One forbidden tree in Eden seemed better than a thousand trees allowed. That terrible magician has power to concentrate our gaze upon one object — power to withdraw our eyes from the pure and wholesome fruits of many trees, and rivet them upon that one forbidden thing. He so intensifies our thought upon that one desire that it outgrows all desires, and perhaps life itself for the time seems stale and flat unless that one desire be gratified. That is one of the supernatural powers

Third Day of Lent.

of the serpent to charm his victims. This dreadful delusion, this deadly fascination, fills common objects with dazzling beauty. The colored lights of hell are reflected upon earthly things, and make them appear heavenly. Thus the gaming table is made to assume attractions which make money and land and houses insignificant trifles in comparison. Thus a glass of liquor grows in beauty and power that will out-dazzle the love of family, or the joys of home, or even the hopes of heaven.

Third Day of Lent.

WHEN the pot of passion boils over, then human law takes cognizance, not before. In this it differs from the law of Christ, which sees the ingredients in the caldron seething, bubbling, prevented only by fear from boiling over often. Thus with murder,—the law sees it only in the crimson blood and the ghastly corpse; Christ sees boiling in the heart, the pot of death, the poisonous ingredients of hate and greed. “ Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” So with adultery. Society takes cognizance of the sickening scandal; but Christ sees the poison in the heart, sees the fire burn, and the caldron boil, and the poison seethe, and exultant demons, witch-like, join hands

Fourth Day of Lent.

around the charmed pot, and add their odious portions. Ah, human heart! wilt thou thus lie still and let devils brew within thee the hell-broth of infamy and death? Do you think, because no human eyes see this, that it is innocent or safe?

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Aye, and woe to the foul in heart, for God shall see them.

Fourth Day of Lent.

WHEN David proposed to build a house to God, his pious wish was appreciated, but God told him, through honest old Nathan, that he could not build the Lord's house. David's hands were bloody. God is in no hurry. He desired the temple to be built. He wanted it, but it had better never be built than to be built by wrong methods or wrong precedents, or by the wrong man. He told David that He had already been represented on earth by a tabernacle for centuries, and that He could wait. A transient resident of a miner's camp can live in a tent, but when a man is going to spend his life in a town he builds upon the best foundations, and adorns his home with the slow-growing and sturdy oak. Corporations build stronger, and governments stronger still. Historic churches are willing to devote centuries to the slow growth of

First Sunday in Lent.

massive minsters. So the eternal God would rather have his work done properly than quickly. He would rather have his work true and silent, than noisy and false. He would rather have it solid than showy ; unseen and eternal rather than seen and temporal. He would rather have one Bible given away by a clean hand than ten distributed by a foul one. He would rather have five Christians who are Christians across counters, and over dinner-tables, and behind neighbors' backs, than a thousand who are Christians only in church on Sunday morning. He would rather have the Church grow with an increase of ten sincere conversions, than have it flooded with a hundred shallow professions, with its certain ebb-tide of ninety back-sliders.

First Sunday in Lent.

“REPENT!” This word reverberated through the wilderness waste of Judea. “Repent!” This was the keynote of the Baptist’s preaching. “Repent!” This caught the haughty Pharisee’s ear, and startled the mailed Roman. “What shall we do?” — “Do?” — “Yes, what?” — “Do good.” — “Is that repentance?” — “Yes.” — Repentance is positive, tangible. It is not sentiment, it is not pretty words, it is not a spasm ; it is plain duty, it

Fifth Day of Lent.

is downright determination to do right, so help me God. This John preached, this Jesus taught. Repentance is not crying, "Lord, Lord!" but doing the will of my Father which is in heaven. Mercy, justice, humility, purity, truth,—doing these things, and the undoing of their opposites, that is repentance. To the slave of flesh, repentance means control ; to the libertine it means chastity ; to the stingy it means liberality ; to the slanderer it means charity ; to the harsh it means gentleness ; to the impatient it means long-suffering ; to the discontented it means gratitude ; to the sinner it means that which he is not and ought to be. Of the incidentals to repentance — sorrow, tears, emotion — the Bible takes little account, because it would not divert our attention from the main thing, which is to hate sin and forsake it.

Fifth Day of Lent.

LAST summer the good ship *Wieland* brought over a large number of caged birds. When we were about mid-ocean one restless bird escaped from his cage. In ecstasy he swept through the air, away and away from his prison. How he bounded with outspread wings ! Freedom ! How sweet he thought it ! Across the pathless waste he

Sixth Day of Lent.

entirely disappeared. But after hours had passed, to our amazement, he appeared again, struggling towards the ship with heavy wing. Panting and breathless, he settled upon the deck. Far, far over the boundless deep, how eagerly, how painfully had he sought the ship again, now no longer a prison, but his dear home. As I watched him nestle down on the deck, I thought of the restless human heart that breaks away from the restraints of religion. With buoyant wing he bounds away from Church the *prison*, and God the *prison*. But if he is not lost on the remorseless deep, he comes back again with panting, eager heart, to Church the *home*, and God the *home*. The Church is not a prison to any man. It gives the most perfect freedom in all that is *good* and all that is *safe*. It gives him liberty to do what is *right*, and to do what is *wrong* there is no rightful place to any man in all the boundless universe.

Sixth Day of Lent.

LOVE! St. Paul eulogized it in his Corinthian Epistle. Love is the Christian's life, his rule, his motive power, his incentive, his destination, his reward, his God. Orators' eloquence, singers' melody, angels' songs, without love, are hollow, heartless sound. Theological knowledge without love

Sixth Day of Lent.

is dry lumber in a garret. Leo X. and Henry VIII. were theologians. A man may have dogged faith in a cause that will energize his will to move mountains of difficulty, like Richelieu, yet without love he is nothing. He may play the card of alms-giving, and be defiant to the martyr's stake; without love it profiteth nothing. Long-suffering and kindness are its *general characteristics*. "Envieth not"—let others be happy. "Vaunteth not itself"—does not swagger and talk big. "Does not behave unseemly"—hate, not love, makes men do ugly. A healthy parasite of hate growing at a man's heart eats up all its sweetness. Love "seeketh not her own"—she is not forward; she is no loud creature made up of paint and noise, but a coy maiden, calm as the blue sky, modest as the wee daisy, pure as the mountain rill, *Charity!* "Is not provoked"—loseth not her temper. Controlled temper is a splendid energy. Lose your temper, and it will find you. "Thinketh no evil"—instead of putting two and two together and making four, it takes two from two, making nothing. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity"—there are those who rejoice in an enemy's disgrace, though hell triumph by it. "Rejoiceth in the truth"—charity never minimizes the truth. Love never says, "Oh, well, it don't make any difference what you believe." "Beareth all things"—like the broad sea, quenching every spark of spite. "Believeth all things"—believes in brother man with all his faults.

Seventh Day of Lent.

“ Hopeth all things ”—man will yet come to the goal with palms of victory. “ Endureth all things ”—love makes watching and waiting and toil sweet.

Seventh Day of Lent.

IN Mammoth Cave the old negro guide told us how people had been lost there from time to time. When found, they overwhelmed him with embraces and other demonstrations of gratitude. Some became insane through fright; some fled in terror from the guides. Once a woman was lost for about twenty-four hours. In that terrible darkness, in the silence in which hearts beat loud, she had waited in dreadful suspense. Superstitious dread filled her crazed heart. At last the guide came, his footfalls echoing like whispers and groans, his lantern casting ghostly shadows upon the walls. The poor terrified creature arose, and fled away into the darkness. The guide pursued — a veritable black devil he seemed! At last he overtook her,—unconscious, prostrate, ashy white. In his strong arms he raised her from the ground, and carried her out to safety and light and home!

How often is it so! When the Saviour comes, we flee from him. Misconceptions of Him, distortions of Him, shadows of Him in this dark world, fancies of Him in our sinful hearts, make Him

Eighth Day of Lent.

seem other than He is. And we flee from our Saviour and our Guide — flee away into the darkness. And yet He came to find us, to save us, to bear us to the light. He came to his own, and his own received him not.

Eighth Day of Lent.

IT is said that man is a religious animal. He must have some religion. To any Christian it must be the religion of Christ ; that or none. We cannot go back to paganism. We cannot return to Judaism. Judaism is nothing but a promissory note. If Christ is not the Messiah, that note is two thousand years past due, and daily becoming more worthless and more hopeless. We cannot go to Mahomet, riding armor-clad and blood-stained, leading us to a life of revenge and a heaven of sensuality. We cannot accept Brahmanism, with its vedas and its Hindoo gods, with its metaphysical quibbles and its social tyrannies. Every woman, and every man with wife and sister and daughter, says, we will have no Brahmanism. We cannot be atheists, and say “There is no God!” for then would Nature’s heart cease to beat, and we could only stand orphaned by its mighty corpse, and wait without hope till we are buried at last in the same eternal grave of rayless night.

Tenth Day of Lent.

Ninth Day of Lent.

THERE is no contrast so fearful as the contrast between the illusions of temptation before the sin is committed, and its reality afterwards; between the appearance of the forbidden fruit as it hangs upon the tree, and the taste it leaves in the mouth. How cruel the tempter's irony when he said, "Your eyes shall be opened"! No sooner had the hell-kindled desire been indulged, than their souls were smitten with a cold and shivering disgust. The fruit turned to ashes in their mouth. The tree so beautified by colored lights of hell dwindle to a thorn-tree, scattering seed to curse the soil and tear the children's feet. The angelic radiance of the tempter falls off, and betrays the cold coils of the loathsome serpent. The flowers of Eden wither as soon as plucked, and the garden itself is blasted and blackened by the fires of an outraged conscience.

Tenth Day of Lent.

HOW defective, how false, is the world's judgment! If the Pharisee labors and prays to be seen of men, verily he shall have his reward. He shall be seen of men, and praised of them, too, no doubt. But what is it all worth? Praise is

Second Sunday in Lent.

the most hollow, the most uncertain thing. The enhancement of worldly circumstance makes men appear better than they are. What a veil will wealth throw over a rich man's vices! What attraction will beauty give even to the ignorance and folly of a woman! What undeserved applause merely accidental success will win! Wealth, beauty, genius, success, are pedestals upon which a moral dwarf may stand, and look taller than the moral giant who stands upon the plain earth of homeliness or poverty. But it will not always be so. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." We will carry no pedestals out. When we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, we will stand upon our own feet and be judged as we are. Then will follow the great reversal of human judgments. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

Second Sunday in Lent.

I REMEMBER with distinct vividness the most relished food I ever ate. It was a hard crust, by a mountain rill. The sauce was hunger. Again, a sense of duty has often made me go almost with loathing to a sumptuous feast. In one case each dry crumb turned to blood and

Second Sunday in Lent.

strength. In the other case each rich morsel turned to lead and stupor. Let teachers of children consider this. Well-meaning mothers or curriculums may stuff without nourishing. Thus some as full as a bookshelf are no wiser. God feeds through the appetite. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich hath He sent empty away." Thus the pale, crammed graduate, rich in self-esteem, sheepskins, and mother's kisses, may go empty away,—empty of mental vigor and clear vision. There are men full of moral platitudes, and empty of moral principle ; full of maxims, good forms, and Pharisees' formulas, but empty of real love for truth and right. In religion especially thousands are starving, not for want of food, but for want of appetite. What has clogged your soul's appetite ? Perhaps it needs fresh air. Then force your soul out of the narrow walls of self. Perhaps it needs exercise. Then grapple with some good and earnest Christian work. Perhaps it has been surfeiting on sweetmeats. Then discard forever religious sentimentality—a religion of trash — newspaper, yellow-back-novel religion. Come hungry, and God will feed you. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ; for they shall be filled."

Eleventh Day of Lent.

Eleventh Day of Lent.

OUR Lord knows what is in man. The superficial, upper soil does not deceive Him. Under the covering of good clothes he sees the false heart if it be there. Under the careless disciple's dirty skin, he may see a promising life, if it were only washed. Christ saw through Judas and Herod and the Pharisees. He saw through Simon Peter. This Simon is at bottom a rock. There was considerable trash about the man, — impulse, inconsistency, and meaningless talk, — but a rock after all. Jesus looked to this at a glance. He did not discuss it; he saw it, he felt it, he knew it. This fine quality of mind, this delicacy, this sensitiveness which unconsciously photographs character with a look, usually belongs to the more subtle minds of women. It is a divine quality. Some men have it to a high degree. The Saviour had it to an unspeakable degree. His delicate sensibility, his perfectly sympathetic heart and mind, are as impressive as the conscious quicksilver to catch a faultless image of our life, our troubles, our fears, and doubts. His being in heaven does not impair his power to know us and sympathize with us. Therefore He is the true father confessor, the great priest, to whom we can go with assurance. We shall not be misunderstood. Like the mother's heart — far more than the mother's heart — will his instinctive love respond to each heart pang and fear.

Twelfth Day of Lent.

Twelfth Day of Lent.

THREE is no description of heaven in the Bible. Even what the Revelation of St. John says of it may be regarded as symbolical. There are hints, symbols, almost glimpses, but no description. The Talmudists described heaven, and made it a grotesque and ludicrous fairy-land, full of ogres and giants. Mahomet described heaven, and made it a magnified earth, full of magnified vices and satiated sensualists. The Bible does not describe heaven, because there is no use of describing it to us, whose earthly capacities could not grasp it. To our immature faculties it is indescribable. Let a child see men, give him books about manhood to read, yet he has no conception of the emotions, the thoughts, the fears, and the hopes of a man. Suppose a prophet could have described to Adam the nineteenth century. I doubt if Gabriel himself could have made Adam understand the social condition, the religious, the political, the mechanical revolutions, of our day. So would it be impossible for us to understand heaven, with its vast social developments and its ritual splendors, with its mighty, sweeping changes, with its growths and evolutions, by which its perfected citizens are ever progressing from glory to glory.

Thirteenth Day of Lent.

Thirteenth Day of Lent.

NATIONS must settle their differences by arbitration instead of war, because we have such commercial relations with our antagonists that we cannot afford to fight. For the same reason the differences between the Church and the world ought to be settled by arbitration, because of the close domestic, social, and financial intimacy between them. The Paul of the nineteenth century is a guest in Mammon's house, and Mammon publishes his sermon in the morning paper. Yet let us never forget that with all these appearances of peace there are two distinct sides. The conflict is just as real, the victories are just as glorious, and the defeats just as ruinous, as though the conflict were a conflict of blood. This is the modern, the civilized mode of conflict,—the conflict of diplomats instead of armies, the conflict of pens instead of swords, of brains instead of brutal force. Let us remember that in this quiet conflict between God and Mammon, between truth and falsehood, we all bear a part. Let us not be deceived by the silence of things. Men are borne in silent flight to ruin upon the noiseless wing of hellish tendencies. Let not the moral savor of the world's philosophy hide from our eyes the hollowness and idolatry which everywhere surround us. We must

Fourteenth Day of Lent.

conform to modern usage, it is better. Let the conflict be a moral fight. But we must never for one moment lose sight of its real and vital character. Let not the devil escort you to hell with a smile.

Fourteenth Day of Lent.

SOME persons have thought that the highest aspiration of a Christian's life is to get to the dead level of innocence. They measure their spiritual progress by the question, "How far am I from the devil?" instead of "How near am I to God?" But all of this is merely negative, not positive; destructive, not constructive. Some one has compared the religious life to moving into a house. There are repairs to be made. Perhaps the foundation timbers are rotten. But when the house is repaired it has still to be furnished, and we must furnish each one his own spiritual house. Every man is the cabinet-maker of his own soul furniture. We are the weavers to upholster our own hearts. We are the artists to decorate the walls of our own imaginations. We are the musicians to make and tune the stringed instruments that are to fill our lives with melody. If we are idle, our spiritual house will be empty and cheerless and musicless.

Fifteenth Day of Lent.

Fifteenth Day of Lent.

SHALL we prove that it is reasonable for a lawyer to practise law? for the farmer to sow seed? for the merchant to buy and sell? Shall we prove, then, that man should do that which he was made to do; that the creature ought to serve the Creator? This is his business. If he do not that, he is a failure as a man. Even as an animal his success is only partial. The deer is swifter, the ass is stronger, the sparrow is merrier. As a man he is a failure. He may be a success as a clothes-weaver, or as a fact-collector, or as a money-gatherer, but as a man, as a child of God, as a member of the kingdom of heaven, he is a failure. Like a book used for fuel — a failure as a book, and poor fuel. It is sad to see anything debased to low and sordid ends, which was made for high purposes. Here is the hulk of a noble ship, used for a wrecker's hut. What a fall was there, thou once fair and free-winged rover of the sea! Here is a godly garden become a swine-pen. Miry filth instead of delicate and fragrant bloom. Here is a caged eagle with wing broken and feathers befouled, hobbling in the dirt. Ah, thou king of aerial heights and purity! But far sadder than all is the immortal spirit of man, bound by the habits and crippled by the passions of the world, — like the lap-wing, crowned with a crown, and feeding on dirt.

Sixteenth Day of Lent.

Sixteenth Day of Lent.

CHARACTER is a building of which every man is his own architect. Human characters present every variety, from the rickety hovel to the Gothic minster. Among great characters there is a wide diversity of style. There are Gothic characters, and composite characters, and Romanesque, and Oriental, and classic. We have the classic Parthenon, and Addison and Macaulay. We have the Roman Coliseum, and Martin Luther. We have the Stones of Venice, and Jeremy Taylor. We have Edinburgh Castle, and Thomas Carlyle. We have Westminster Abbey, and William E. Gladstone. We have the Pyramids of Egypt in their grand and enduring simplicity, and we have Robert E. Lee. John Ruskin tells us there are "seven lamps of architecture," or seven principles which must enter into every building that aspires to true greatness. These principles are sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory, and obedience.

It may be said that that character also is truly great in which John Ruskin's seven lamps of architecture find their highest development.

Let architects of material building study the Coliseum, where the three orders of Greek architecture are found,—Doric in the first story, Ionic

Third Sunday in Lent.

in the second, and Corinthian in the third ; but let character-builders study the life of Jesus Christ, that temple in which all of John Ruskin's seven lamps of architecture meet in perfect proportion.

Third Sunday in Lent.

WATCH ! Temptation comes as a whipped-foe, and begins to say, " Oh, I am worsted ; there is no danger in me." Watch it ! Firemen watch the smouldering coals that the wind may again inflame. Men watch closely that place in an embankment which has once given away. Again, temptation comes with a new face, and says, " I am not your weakness." Take heed ! Faithful Abraham lost his faith, meek Moses was impatient, David became sensual, and lion-hearted Peter trembled. Again, temptation comes as a child, and says, " Oh, I am so little, I cannot do anything." Watch it ! Little temptations are seeds of the upas-tree, eggs of the serpent, sleeping dynamite. The devil puts the little Oliver Twist through the window to open the door for him, the big robber. Hell is first lit with shavings. Again, temptation comes as a smiling friend, and says, " You know me and love me ; fear not." Watch it ! The beloved Delilah betrayed the strong Samson to death. Watch and pray. The sentinel's

Seventeenth Day of Lent.

power lies in his communication with the power that supports him, and then watchfulness. If he watch only, he can do nothing when the enemy comes. He is one, the enemy is an army. But if he too can summon an army, then is his watching effective. So is prayer the Christian watchman's communication with the powers above him. If he watch only, he can do nothing, for he contends with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. But if he watch and pray, he, too, can summon powers omnipotent to his rescue. And prayer is communication with that Power.

Seventeenth Day of Lent.

SUPPOSE a boy should say, "It is great trouble to become a man. I must go to bed four thousand times, and get up and dress four thousand times, and eat twelve thousand meals, before I can be a man." We would think the boy foolish; we would say, "Let each day take care of itself." If our Christian duties become part of our daily life, we will never think of them as burdens. The joy and health of growth will repay us for all our efforts. Growth is its own reward. It is furnishing our spiritual house for eternity, it is tuning our harps for the harmonies of heaven, it is whetting the appetite to feed on angels' food. It is fitting

Eighteenth Day of Lent.

ourselves for the presence of God. The growth of the soul never ceases. The body reaches its maturity and then decays, the mind arises to its zenith and then fails. But in the decrepitude of age the soul is in its youth. One of the joys of heaven will be its continued growth. God's children will not stand still there. Each year they will be better, each century stronger, each cycle happier than the last. Eternity will be one infinite approach to the glorious consummation, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Eighteenth Day of Lent.

I HAVE read a story somewhere — I wish somebody would tell me where — about some men practising a strange revenge upon an enemy. They found him alone at a saw-mill deep in a forest. They bound him to the carriage of the saw, and, adjusting the carriage so that he would reach the teeth of the whizzing saw in about half an hour, they left him to his fate. With horrible suspense he viewed the bloodthirsty avenger, to which, inch by inch, he was drawn nearer and nearer. The savage foe shrieked, and its fierce teeth gleamed in the light. The prostrate victim at last seized this faint hope, — perhaps, oh ! perhaps, the teeth of the saw would cut the rope and release him before it

Nineteenth Day of Lent.

killed him. And so the suspense became more intense as he was drawn nearer still, and the supreme question became, "Shall this dreadful assailant be my deliverer or my destroyer?" Surely such a position of suspense and peril, such hazard, such jeopardy, is bad enough to be the revenge of the most cruel enemy. But the man who trusts to death-bed repentance voluntarily places himself in this terrible position. He wilfully places himself in a position where it is uncertain whether death, the great avenger, will be his deliverer or his destroyer. He wilfully places his soul in this situation of suspense and jeopardy. Nearer and nearer his soul draws on to meet the dreadful problem.

Nineteenth Day of Lent.

ONE of the most offensive features of atheism is that it takes away a man's treasure, and gives him no substitute. It robs him without equivalent. It merely destroys. Sometimes it is good to destroy. If we "pluck a thistle to plant a flower," if we destroy a den to build a school, if we take a half error out of a man's heart to make room for a whole truth, — that is good. But wanton destruction is cowardly and base. The destroyer, what a despicable creature! The whole brood of them is to be despised, from "the aspir-

Twentieth Day of Lent.

ing youth who fired the Ephesian dome," down to the Puritan iconoclast who robbed Scotland of her Gothic splendors. They are to be despised, and they are to be challenged. When one comes to destroy, have a guaranty from him; make him give bond that he will give better than he takes. Destruction requires no greatness, no courage, no genius. The low-browed vandal could destroy the creations of a Phidias. The fanatic caliph Omar could lay waste the literary treasures of Alexandria, the patient work of centuries. All honor to the builder! Away with the despoiler, the deviator! Challenge all who come with critic's scalpel and iconoclast's hammer. This is a safe rule in religion — safe in anything.

Twentieth Day of Lent.

MANY men spend their lives building foundations upon which they never erect any superstructure. They spend their lives preparing to live, and about the time they get ready to live they die. "I must have a fortune," says one; "life is not worth living without that." He forsakes society, he cramps his life, he has time for neither books nor friendship nor religion. These by and by. But his wife dies, his children marry and depart, and when at last he is ready, he finds

Twenty-first Day of Lent.

himself without friends to reward or enemies to punish. Another will not begin life until he has great learning. But when, at the last, his arsenal is filled with ammunition, he awakes to find that the enemy has captured his territory. Lawyers despise real cases which they have, because they are dreaming of large cases which they have not. Some neglect a good practice for a precarious political career. Physicians, as a rule, settle early to real life, but even some of them make one feel that he is being used as a physiological study, to prepare the doctors for future usefulness. There are preachers with whom the country parish is a stepping-stone to the city parish, and the city parish is a blind from which to hunt a bishopric. That is wrong. Live in the present. Life is not far off. We are in it, perhaps near the end of it.

Twenty-first Day of Lent.

THREE are many men who consider God an object of charity, and his Church and ministers beneficiaries. They say, "Oh, I should like to give something, but it is all I can do to meet my regular expenses." Now, what I wish to emphasize is that *God is not an object of charity*, and religion *is* one of your regular expenses, whether you meet it or not. You might just as well get flour and

Twenty-second Day of Lent.

butter at your grocer's, and send your children to school, and receive the attentions of a physician, and protection from the government, and when the grocer and the physician and the tax-gatherers bring in their bills, say, "Oh, I should like to give you something, but it is all I can do to meet my regular expenses." You cannot get rid of the obligation by staying away from church, for the beneficence of religion is so far-reaching that even the scorner is compelled to occupy the unamiable position of receiving benefits from the very hand that he spits upon.

Twenty-second Day of Lent.

THE entering wedge of the prodigal's ruin was **T**a wish — a wish for unhallowed freedom, an unhallowed wish for what is only God's, — absolute independence. This was the prodigal's sin. It is the crying sin of a prodigal and wayward world, this claiming legal right to license, this claiming legal right to selfish, unrestrained, irresponsible use of God's loans, — life, time, strength, intellect, culture, beauty, money. Men crave to be gods; but independence of God does not make men gods, it makes them devils. This is just what made the first devils. The angelic sons of God wanted freedom, and the Father let them go, and they left the heavenly home and became prodigals and wanderers

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

forever. God's service is the most perfect freedom. It affords the largest amplitude of range, wide enough for the freest and boldest wing to fly. Its very limitations are intended for protection against other bondages, that are cruel and ruinous.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

“HOME guards to the front!” was the cry of '65. Look at them, slight lads stooping under their heavy muskets, decrepit men tottering on with cane in one hand and gun in the other; convalescent, furloughed soldiers rising like a wounded war-horse. And has war come to this? Yes, and worse. It has seen the nursing mother, and feeble aged women, and delicate girls, defending the parapet. The hearth must be protected, and the husband, the little lad, and the white-haired father are gone, dead, dead in their blood! Women are to the front only because there are no men, none at all. But wait; there is a war for home and fireside, a war for rights more dear and from foes more cruel, in which women face its fury, not because the men have fallen first, but because men shirk. Yes, men shirk the discipline, the hardships, the responsibility of this war. Not all men, thank God! yet many do. Happy in their homes, receiving the blessings of Christianity, they are will-

Twenty-third Day of Lent.

ing to see the wives and mothers fight the battle. The hosts of hell, with black flag unfurled, surround us, menacing the peace of home, threatening slavery and death. With dreadful malice and cruelty they contend for every inch of ground. It is a battle, remorseless, ceaseless, momentous. It appeals to all that is manly in men to take their places in it, to submit to its discipline, to endure its hardships, to shoulder its responsibility.

Twenty-third Day of Lent.

“OUR Father which art in Heaven.” God is more than a “great first cause,” more than an “inscrutable power.” He is a Father. He is a heavenly Father. He is our Father. Nothing could be more reassuring; for “behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” In all the Bible invitations to prayer, there is none so encouraging as this: “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father.” Every fatherhood takes its meaning and derives its beauty from the Fatherhood of God. Every home circle is a likeness of the heavenly home, of which God is the centre. He is the Father, and his is the family after whom “every family in heaven and earth is named.”

Twenty-fourth Day of Lent.

This broadens our charity and deepens our humanity. Not "my Father," but "our Father,"—mine and Jesus Christ's and Mary Magdalene's. From such a Father I look for sympathy, instruction, correction, and to Him I owe reverence, dependence, obedience, and imitation,—aye, and fraternity with all the children of God.

Twenty-fourth Day of Lent.

"**H**ALLOWED be Thy name," we say. How can we? How can we hallow that which is already perfectly holy? How can we increase what is infinitely great? We cannot. But this we can do. Suppose on yonder wall were hung one of Raphael's paintings. We could add nothing to its marvellous beauty, but we might remove obstructions. We could improve the light, we could give glasses to the near-sighted, we could point out beauties to the untutored. So with God. We cannot give power to Him who has strewn space with worlds. We cannot extend the existence of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting. We cannot increase the wisdom of Him who paints every flower and guides every star. We cannot enlarge the providence of Him who

"Throws open the golden gates of day,
And draws around a sleeping world
The dusky curtains of the night."

Twenty-fifth Day of Lent.

We cannot make Him more merciful, who gave his life a ransom for many. But this we can do. We can use our tongues and our lives to throw light upon this wondrous picture. We can remove the obstacles of worldliness and sin which prevent ourselves and others from seeing it. We can earnestly labor to educate the hearts of the untutored to feel its beauty, its glory, and its power. In this way we may hallow the name of God.

Twenty-fifth Day of Lent.

“**T**HY kingdom come.” The provinces of God extend through heaven and earth and hell. “Thy kingdom come,” is a fervent prayer that all wrong shall be righted everywhere. It is a prayer for the militant Church, — that mighty army which, in weakness and strength, in success and failure, sets its banners against the powers of darkness and death. It is a prayer for the protection and development of the Holy of Holies, that Church within the Church, that invisible real within the visible nominal. It is a prayer for the Church triumphant, that the day soon may dawn when “He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, and deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.” Thy kingdom come, O God, to shorten the day of death, to drive darkness from

Twenty-sixth Day of Lent.

the earth, and, like the rising sun, dispel the deeds and fears of night!

A myriad voices, from a myriad lands, in a myriad tongues, seem to say, "The kingdom of God is at hand." Even so, come, Lord Jesus,— come quickly.

Twenty-sixth Day of Lent.

"**T**HY will be done." The commander lays out his plan, and every mysterious order, every seemingly useless march and countermarch, every hard-fought battle, every apparently cruel execution or heartless act, every diplomatic measure, subserves to develop this plan, and bring it to its issue. So with Him "who ruleth over all." He has his plan. Every mysterious providence, every evolution of nature, every suffering saint, every ebb and flow of the Church's life and fortune, secretly but surely brings that plan to its perfect consummation. In this Divine Will we may be cheerful contributors, or compelled and unwilling agents. In the triumphant procession of God we may, we must, take a part, either by swelling the chorus or by following the chariot-wheels in captive's chains. "Thy will be done," is the cry of acquiescence. Submission does not mean insensibility. Grace makes the heart more tender. Those who submit most patiently suffer most

Twenty-seventh Day of Lent.

keenly and feel most deeply. When the Christian mother, in the silent hours of night, sees in feverish dreams her dead babe near her still, and, waking, finds the pillow empty, we thank God that she can weep. Tears are God's gift. Among the gems of the Bible are the tears of Job and David and Jesus. Submission is seeing, through our tears, the merciful hand of God.

Twenty-seventh Day of Lent.

“**G**IVE us this day our daily bread.” *This day* implies regular and constant prayer. *Bread* implies the necessities, not the dainties of life. *Daily* bread implies present needs, not future accumulations. *Our* daily bread means that the channel of God's gifts shall be our own efforts. *Give us*, means that though we plant and water, God must give the increase. *Give us*, not *give me*, means that we must live and *let* live. He who can say all of this prayer is a happy man. He has settled in his own heart the problem of bread, for which the socialist is demanding a solution. He has armed himself against discontent.

I have read of a child whose destitute mother was trying to shelter it from the winter's blast. They had gotten in a stack of straw, and were fortunate enough to find an old barn door, which

Twenty-eighth Day of Lent.

they had pulled over their dry nest. As the sleet and rain beat upon the door, and the wind howled through the dark night, the little one snuggled close, and putting her hand to her mother's cheek, for she could not see her, she whispered, —

“ Isn’t God good, mother, to give us this warm bed to-night? and aren’t you sorry, mother, for the poor people out in the rain and the dark? ”

Ah me! let us learn, in whatsoever state we are, to be therewith content. Hid in the hollow of his hand, we shall be sheltered from the storm-winds of all overwhelming evil.

Twenty-eighth Day of Lent.

“ **F**ORGIVE us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Jesus preached a sermon on this. In the parable of the forgiven, unforgiving servant, He gives us a picture of the impudence and hideousness of unforgiveness. It is a strong, vivid picture, that frightens us, and we exclaim, “ Lord, is it I? ” There are some men — poor fellow-travellers to the grave — whose step is so different from our step that we cannot walk with them. But, surely, there is no fellow-servant in sorrow, in sin and in weakness, whom we cannot forgive from the heart, while every day and hour we must crave

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

pardon from his Father and my Father, from his King as well as mine. Unforgiveness is disowning the mother that bore us free-born sons into the light and liberty of pardon. Refusing to forgive is like clambering upon some good rock to save myself from the angry sea, and then refusing to assist, refusing even to permit, another struggling mortal to climb upon it, claiming it as our right.

There is still another picture which Jesus has given us, which is the very climax of all that can be said or thought on the subject of forgiveness. After years of persistent persecution, misrepresentation, hatred, abuse, and insult, He watched his triumphant, intolerant enemies drive the nails through his quivering flesh, and prayed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Yet He never had need to ask forgiveness for Himself. We must every day.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

"**L**EAD us not into temptation." This petition comes naturally after the prayer for forgiveness. When a man wakes up to see hanging over him the spectre of sin,—unable to move, almost losing breath under the oppression of guilt,—he cries aloud, "Forgive, oh, forgive!" When, then,

Twenty-ninth Day of Lent.

the Lord comes to rescue him, to remove the weight, and he arises a free man, and catches a full breath of God's forgiveness, his first impulsive wish is that he shall not get into the same distress again. After the prayer "Forgive," comes the prayer "Lead us not into temptation." This is a terse and striking way of saying, "Father, lead us, lest we fall into temptation."

Give thy heart to God's leading, and the devil will keep out of the way. Keep the ear of thy conscience sensitive, so that thou mayst hear the still small voice saying to thee, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Go when grace calls thee, and where it directs thee.

Christian perfection lies in this: first, to skill the conscience to hear the Spirit's gentle voice, and then to obey. In all thy ways remember Him, and He will direct thy paths. Father, lead us, lest we fall into temptation.

Twenty-ninth Day of Lent.

"DELIVER us from evil." What disaster hath the devil wrought! What a train of evils! The daily newspaper is the record of the world's sin and sorrow and tragedy. What instances of depravity; what depths of hellish lust; what horrible murder; what sickening accidents; what

Thirtieth Day of Lent.

heart-breaking want ; what sin ; what crime ! No man can tell what a day may bring forth. One begins the day in prosperity, and ends it in despair. The sun rises upon a family with fair promises of peace, and sets on their broken idols. A mother kisses the red cheeks of her buoyant boy in the morning, and at eventide kisses the cold lips of his corpse. To-day our hearts swell with pride, to-morrow our heads bend in disgrace. You say this is pessimistic. Be it so. But all of these things happen every day. God in his mercy grant that they may not happen to us ! Deliver us from evil ! Whether this evil mean the Evil One, or his evil work, is not worth discussing. One is but part and parcel of the other. All evil comes from sin, and all sin comes from the devil. God deliver us from them all !

Thirtieth Day of Lent.

DE PROFUNDIS ! “Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O Lord.” These are the words of some unknown but true poet. It is a prayer ; short, direct, intense, coming from some heart of godly power ; not rhetorical, but eloquent. Not wreathing to the heavens like blue smoke to be scattered by the winds, but ejaculated from some rebounding soul, long bent, it pierces the sky like an arrow. This is a voice, unknown yet

Thirty-first Day of Lent.

human, crying from the depth of some divine despair. Our hearts respond to its pathos. We know that it is not a perfunctory prayer that comes from the depths, but a cry. Afflictions give fervor and boldness to prayer. Affliction makes men earnest. Affliction is faith's element; as the life-boat which decays upon the shore and in the sunshine, triumphs on the breast of storms. I believe that every true Christian can look back over the past, and see in the depth of some great darkness, the memory and light of a fervid prayer, shining like a star. And the influence of such a prayer is never lost. Having once looked from the pit into the face of God, we can never wholly forget Him. It is our Gethsemane prayers that bring the angels.

Thirty-first Day of Lent.

OH, the life and strength and hopefulness and joyousness and buoyancy and exuberance of youth! We are young but once. We can have but one springtime. Springtime is the time for flowers, but it is also the seedtime. We would not like to see a young farmer who feels no pleasure when the first trailing arbutus breaks through the snow, or whose heart does not bound when the chirp of the robin first falls on his ear. But we think it will be all the sweeter to him if the flower

Thirty-second Day of Lent.

greets him as he rides through the woods to his work, or if he hears the bird's morning hymn as he walks behind his plough. So will the flowers and songs and loves of youth be sweeter when they come in the intervals of labor, and among the purposes and efforts to do something good and worthy of strong young manhood. Youth will never come back to you, but you will carry much of its light and joy with you through life. Your summer, your autumn, and even the winter of your life, will be ever bringing forth the stored-up fruits of a well-spent springtime.

Thirty-second Day of Lent.

WE ought to encourage whatever increases or preserves reverence among our people. We are in danger of being a nation of iconoclasts. With unholy hands men tear down the monuments of the past, and nothing escapes their insatiable curiosity. They tear to pieces whatever is lovely, as the botanist tears in tatters the beautiful flowers, or as the smith melts in his crucible the graceful vase. God forbid that the spirit of inquiry should cease ! Let it go on. Yet is not this dissection, this analysis of everything, in danger of destroying the romance and poetry of life ? But you say, " Better truth than poetry." May we not have

Thirty-third Day of Lent.

both? Is there any reason why the practical man should not have a soul, or why the scientist should not have a human heart? What I am speaking against is that unnatural insensibility, that affected *sang-froid*, that dry-eyes-and-cold-heart utilitarianism, which says that emotion is weakness and reverence is womanish. They are thoroughly practical. The splendid cathedral is a waste of money; Niagara is a mere water-power; Mammoth Cave is a mushroom garden; the Rhine is a steamboat canal; the Alleghanies are obstacles that ought to be dug down; the galleries of genius ought to be converted into factories; the performance of profound symphonies is a time to giggle and talk; friendship is a relic, and love is a dream, — this is what I protest against.

Thirty-third Day of Lent.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

STAND in a church spire. It has four windows, looking north, south, east, and west. From one we see the ocean, from one the city, from one the fields and farms, from the other the mountains. I once stood in a dome, with different colored glass in each window. Thus four men touching each other might see each a different scene; a red

Thirty-fourth Day of Lent.

ocean, a green city, blue fields, and yellow mountains. A rare man might climb to the top of the dome, and see the whole circle of the landscape under the white light of a pure atmosphere. But most of us look through one window, each upon a different world, each world colored by our own individuality. Four men in one street-car buy the morning papers. A moment later one is reading the editorial on politics, another the quotations of the cotton market, another the society column, another a report of a Sunday-school convention. Four men sitting side by side, and each living in a separate world. One man not dreaming of many things in heaven and earth that are the very life of other men; one looking upon the sea of commerce; another upon the fields of agriculture; another upon the city of Vanity Fair, not dreaming of the Celestial mountains. They are there, however.

Thirty-fourth Day of Lent.

THE walls of the great palace at Versailles are covered with paintings of battles. The Bastille, Jena, Austerlitz, the Pyramids! Agony, passion, and death! Heroism and victory! One grows weary with the endless profusion of art. He sits down at last on the casement of a little window. He looks out. Here, too, is a picture. Peaceful

Sixth Sunday in Lent.

France, with its green grass, its forests and fields, and its church tower beyond the placid lake.

The book of Ruth is such a little window amidst the historical pictures, the battle pieces of Israel. Through this window we see the home life which the pictures have hidden — godliness, unselfishness, love and peace. Is it not well for us to turn from the historic, the heroic, and, through some rift, take a swift, sweet glimpse of the pastoral and domestic scenes of life? We read of Sisera's murder and Jephthah's vow and Samson's revenge, and we think ill of Israel. Ruth gives us another view and a truer view. It is not for books and newspapers to publish what is ordinary and commonplace. They publish the remarkable, the wonderful. The very fact that a matter is publishable, is fair evidence that it is exceptional. Let us remember this. Let us remember that little Ruth is the rule, and not the exception. Thus, we will think better of Israel and of all the world.

Sixth Sunday in Lent.

THERE have been times when the drama was used as a moral and religious power. A crime enacted before them may have such an effect as to make the beholders absolutely safe from the committal of that crime. It is morally impossible for

Sixth Sunday in Lent.

one to do that for which his soul has conceived a thorough revulsion. Thus were the angels of God permitted to witness the historical drama of sin and redemption. They were free moral agents. They could fall, as angels had fallen before. But they became spectators of this mighty tragedy. It unfolds and progresses scene by scene, and act by act. They see the ravages of sin, — Eve's tears, Abel's blood, Sodom's flames. Disease, suffering, and death reign. Depravity, abandoned and shameless, holds high carnival. The plot thickens. The Son of God comes down ; the shadows of the cross fall over the scene ; pride, ingratitude, and hate reject the God of gods ; the heartless earth drinks His blood ! All these scenes the angels see. Their holy minds are filled with dismay, with aversion and heart-sick loathing of sin. Though free agents still, there is no longer even a possibility of another rebellion in heaven. If, then, this tragedy upon the stage of this very earth produced an ineffaceable impression upon the intelligences above, what an influence for piety and purity should it have upon us, for whose happiness and welfare this divine drama was permitted to be enacted ?

Monday before Easter.

Monday before Easter.

I HAVE heard a criminal speak of his mother, and his lip quivered like a child's. Mother! Who gets beyond the power of that word? Who forgets his mother? What face in the medley picture of the past is so venerated as hers? Who weeps over our sins and misfortunes as she does? What heart feels like hers? Whose hand soothes like hers? Whose voice sinks to softer tones? Can you match her fidelity, her patience, her prayers? In the darkened sick-room, in the descending shadow of death, at the lonely grave, oh, my mother, there is no soft step, no tender eye, no warm tear like thine! To say, then, that the Church is my Mother, is to say all. She takes me at my birth. She places upon me a diadem; the jewelled drops from the baptismal font sparkle on my brow. She teaches me the form of sound words. She vows me to a holy life. She feeds me with angels' food. She puts in my hand the trembling fingers of my bride. She watches over the changes and chances of my life. She keeps her vigil through the painful hours of my illness. Her words of supplication go up to God with my departing soul. She meets my pale body and bears it to the grave. And ever, year by year, she cheers my bereft ones with songs of immortal

Tuesday before Easter.

hope. Oh, my Mother, how could I live in this sinful, sorrowful world without thee? Oh, holy Bride of Christ, I love thee, I bless thee, I thank God that He has sent thee to love me, and bless me, and to be my Mother!

Tuesday before Easter.

WITHOUT Christ, hope is the falsest will-o'-the-wisp that ever lured to death the fainting soul of man. Men and women with hearts, think of a world without Christ! No Christ, and your mother's aged feet totter into a remorseless grave, from whose darkness no ray shines. No Christ, and the golden heads gathered around your knee are forced away forever by death's cold hand ere long. No Christ, and your own life is a quick transit, marked by successive birthday milestones — out, out into the starless deep. No Christ! Think of it when crape hangs upon the door and light goes out of the home. No Christ, and to whom shall the burdened widow go, and the down-trodden and the weary and the heavy laden? To whom shall dying eyes be turned? Without Christ, what is sweetest and most beautiful in social and domestic life is lost. Eliminate Him, and what must you do? Tell the rosy, white-robed child to prattle its pretty prayer at your knee no

Wednesday before Easter.

more. Close the Sunday-school and hush its joyous anthems. Hang the Christian harp upon the willows, with its "Rock of Ages" and "Jesus, lover of my soul." Clasp the Bible, the dear old book; abolish the Lord's holy day; demolish the churches, those beautiful sermons in stone; speak no words of cheer to the dying; utter no tender words of hope at the grave; place no Christian symbols on the coffin — no resurrection wreath, no anchor, no crown; efface the sentiments of anticipation from the tomb. No Christ! Then the heroism of Christian history from stake and dungeon is a pitiable lie! No Christ! Then "might is right," will be the world's law, expediency its morality, blasted love its present portion, and death eternal its certain doom.

Wednesday before Easter.

"THE headstone of the corner" is a keystone. A keystone is the wedge-shaped stone which keys or binds together the sides of an arch at its top. There is an ancient story that the temple-builders, in absence of the architect, threw away a keystone because of its peculiar shape. It would not fit anywhere in the walls. Finally its proper place was found, and it was raised to the top of the arch. "The stone which the builders rejected

Wednesday before Easter.

became the head of the corner," the keystone of the arch. A beautiful illustration, frequently used, of the rejection and exaltation of Christ. The rejection adds lustre to the glory. Every rejection of Christ turns out the same way: whether rejected by Caiaphas, or Nero, or Herbert Spencer, or Paris Commune, He is ever found, ever raised, ever placed higher in the fabric, the head-stone of the arch. He has no other place. He fits nowhere else. He is not one fine stone along with the rest, Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet. He is the keystone, different in kind from the rest. This or nothing. His place is at the top. The whole fabric of history holds Him up to view. He binds together the arch. Without Him the arch must fall in. Without Him the arch is an unsolved problem. He is the keystone, He solves the problem and locks the arch. He is the keystone of history. Previous history comes up to Him on one side, and subsequent history on the other side, and He unites them. He is the centre of history. He is the keystone of religion. Religion is the arch which bridges the chasm between heaven and earth. The arch, the bridge, cannot be complete without the keystone. The God-man touches each side: his divinity touches the heaven side, his humanity touches the earth side, and the arch is completed, the bridge is effected. Heaven and earth are brought together.

Thursday before Easter.

Thursday before Easter.

WHEN the earnest Christian kneels at the altar to take the consecrated cup, he performs a sixfold act. It is an act of obedience. "This do!" Not a suggestion merely, not a time-honored custom only, but a command—explicit, emphatic.

"Ours not to reason why,
Ours not to make reply,
Ours but to do or die."

It is also an act of remembrance. Not that Christ needed a memorial, but that we needed a memory. A remembered face may go with a child through life, to smile upon his virtues and weep over his vices. Memory is an angel—sometimes an angel with drawn sword. "In remembrance of Me." This is light for the pathway, this is strength for the soul. The holy communion is an act of thanksgiving—a eucharist. This is worthy. Nations honor themselves in honoring their heroes. Thus Garibaldi is honored in Italy, Luther in Germany, Napoleon in France. Thus Italy and France and Germany and all Christian people honor the world's Hero, the world's Saviour, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, in this eucharistic feast. It is also an act of fellowship—a communion. We join with angels and archangels

Good Friday.

and all the company of heaven and of earth to magnify the glorious name of God. It is an act of testimony. Every celebration of this sacrament is one new link in the continuous chain of testimony that comes down through the ages from the upper chamber of Jerusalem. Every hand that takes this bread and cup joins hands with the unbroken chain of priestly hands that reach back to the pierced hands of Jesus. It is an act of expectancy. We show forth the Lord's death till he come. We look back, and we look forward "till he come." It is going up to the altar on the mountain-top and looking to the eastern sky to see if there be any sign of the coming dawn.

Good Friday.

"THE precious blood." St. Peter calls it that. Once that blood had seemed to him more ghastly and hideous than shed human blood ever seemed before. Now it is precious. No other word describes the tenderness which he feels when he thinks of the blood of Jesus. He says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Redeemed! A man is overtaken by misfortune. In deep distress, in dire necessity, he pawns a little gem that once adorned a loved hand

Good Friday.

now clasped in death. He creeps back day by day to see if his treasure is still in the window. He toils and pinches, until at last one day he puts down the hard-earned coin that buys back his treasure. Redeemed! Redeemed means bought back, reclaimed, the lost found, the dead alive again. We are redeemed; but not with corruptible things as silver and gold. If gold could have redeemed us, God would have turned a thousand suns into furnaces and cast the gold from a million worlds into their burning bosoms, and poured a molten river at the feet of Justice. But Justice demands the blood. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." God gives the blood — precious indeed; doubly his own. Is your child's blood soaking on the battlefield a precious price for liberty? This blood on Calvary is the blood of the Son of God. Is the governor's pardon precious to the prisoner in the dark, damp dungeon? More precious far is the blood-bought ransom that sets free the sin-bound soul. Does the sick and penniless prodigal seize with eager joy the pass that bears him back over the wide sea to his home? More precious still the covenant of blood which bears the soul over cold death's dark waves and admits him to his home with God.

Easter Even.

Easter Even.

WHAT a power negative may have ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, what God hath prepared for those who love Him ! How expressive that is ! What hath man's eye not seen ? What beauty ? We have seen our own fair-haired boy sleeping in the moonlight ; we have seen Niagara's rainbows, and the Jungfrau's snow crown ; we have seen the sleeping Como waked by the coming dawn and blush. But eye hath not seen it !— What hath ear not heard ? What melody ? We have heard the warble and chirp and trill, the matins of the fields, and the evensong of the woods ; we have heard, borne on memory's wing, the dear, sad voice of the loved and lost ; we have heard the waves clash their timbrels, and the wind's bugle blast, and the deep cadence of the sea. But ear hath not heard it !— What hath not the heart conceived ? What power and pomp of wealth hath it gathered in its imagination ! What scenes of pleasure, what ecstasies of love, hath it seized with its fancy ! But neither hath the heart of man conceived the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him. May we all love Him more and more.

Easter Day.

Easter Day.

CHRIST was the Son of God when He was spit upon by slaves, but who could believe it? He was the Son of God when bleeding upon the cross, but who could realize it? The resurrection declared His Sonship. "He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." Then the sun which had been shining behind clouds burst forth to sight. Man's heart revives at the sight. He rejoiceth in the manifestation of the Son of God. Of course it was not possible for Christ to be holden of death. But man did not know this. His death seemed to end all, to quench all light. The fond hope "that this had been He which should have redeemed Israel" was resigned with a despairing heart. Nothing short of the resurrection could have restored their confidence. Nothing short of this could have refuted the charge, "Himself he cannot save." Only the resurrection could have sustained men's belief in Him as a Saviour. But the resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God, and brought back the sunlight to men's souls. It decorated the Church's altars with the opening flowers of hope, and filled her mouth with everlasting songs. It sent the Church Militant marching on to meet the Church Triumphant. It discovered to the eyes of faith

Easter Day.

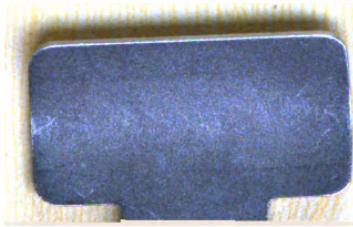
the incorruption and glory and power of the spiritual body ; and to the eyes of hope, the day when our vile bodies shall be changed and made like to Christ's glorious body. It turns the sombre awe of the Mosaic Sabbath into the holy joy of the Christian Sunday, and changes the Babel tongues of sectarian variance into the Easter anthem, sung in unison, "Christ the Lord is risen to-day!" And both Sunday and Easter become foretastes of that blessed day which shall bring to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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